

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY ROM
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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ROME FOR VATICAN OFFICE

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PGOV, VT, CSCE, CZ
SUBJECT: PRAGUE GETS AN ARCHBISHOP

REF PRAGUE 0602 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: CARDINAL TOMASEK WAS INVESTED AS ARCHBISHOP OF PRAGUE
AND PRIMATE OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA ON EASTER SUNDAY BEFORE A LARGE CROWD
IN ST. VITUS'S CATHEDRAL. THIS EVENT HAS IRRITATED CZECHOSLOVAK-
AUSTRIAN RELATIONS BECAUSE BISHOP COADJUTOR OF VIENNA WAS PREVENTED
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FROM ATTENDING. AS A CONSEQUENCE CZECH/VATICAN TALKS MAY ALSO BE
ADVERSELY AFFECTED. END SUMMARY.

2. THOUGH NOT WELL PUBLICIZED BEFOREHAND, INVESTITURE
OF FRANTISEK CARDINAL TOMASEK, 79, AS THE THIRTY-FOURTH PRELATE
OF PRAGUE ATTRACTED AN UNUSUALLY LARGE CROWD FILLING ST.
VITUS'S CATHEDRAL IN HEART OF PRAGUE CASTLE. TOMASEK, WHO IS EIGHTH

ARCHBISHOP OF PRAGUE ALSO TO BE A CARDINAL, HAS BEEN APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR OF THE DIOCESE SINCE 1965. THE SEE HAS BEEN VACANT SINCE 1951. HIGH MASS WAS ATTENDED BY NUMEROUS UNOFFICIAL FOREIGN VISITORS AND BY MANY WESTERN MEMBERS OF THE PRAGUE DIPLOMATIC CORPS. WE ARE TOLD THAT PRIME MINISTER STROUGAL, WHO SPOKE OPTIMISTICALLY ABOUT GOC-VATICAN RELATIONS LAST NOVEMBER AT HIS VIENNA PRESS CONFERENCE, WAS TO HAVE ATTENDED THE CEREMONY, BUT THAT GOC REPRESENTATION WAS DOWN-GRADED AT LAST MINUTE TO LEVEL OF KAREL HRUZA, CHIEF OF SECRETARIAT FOR CHURCH AFFAIRS.

3. TOMASEK'S REMARKS. TOMASEK EMPHASIZED 2000-YEAR IMPACT OF THE EASTER MESSAGE IN A MANNER WHICH TENDED TO DENIGRATE MORE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CZECH HISTORY--SUCH AS COMMUNISM IN BOHEMIA. SIMILARLY, HE RECALLED THE THOUSAND-YEAR-OLD TRADITION OF THE PRAGUE BISHOPRIC, STRESSING IN THIS CONNECTION NOT ONLY HIS OWN RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS THE CHURCH, BUT THAT OF ALL LOCAL BELIEVERS. HE NOTED THAT THERE REMAINED "PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED," IN "OUR CZECH AREA." THROUGHOUT, TOMASEK CHARACTERIZED HIS RESPONSIBILITY AS FIRST TO THE CHURCH, ONLY SECONDLY TO HIS "HOMELAND." HE DID NOT ONCE USE THE OFFICIAL NAME, "CZECHOSLOVAK SOCIALIST REPUBLIC," NOR EVEN "CZECHOSLOVAKIA," ALTHOUGH THE VICAR CONDUCTING THE SERVICE DID REDRESS THE BALANCE BY DOING SO TOWARDS THE END, AND THAT IN A PRAYER FOR "A JUST SOCIAL ORDER."

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4. IT MUST HAVE TAKEN THE NEW ARCHBISHOP NEARLY AN HOUR TO GET BACK TO HIS RESIDENCE OPPOSITE THE HRADCANY GATES, SO NUMEROUS AND PERSISTENT WERE THE APPLAUDING WELL WISHERS WHO SURROUNDED HIM THERE.

5. CZECHOSLOVAK-AUSTRIAN CONTRETEMPS. AUSTRIAN DCM KARAS TELLS US HE INTERVENED AT THE CZECHOSLOVAK FOREIGN MINISTRY ON BEHALF OF THE BISHOP COADJUTOR OF VIENNA FRANZ JACHYM, WHOM TOMASEK HAD INVITED TO ATTEND THE INVESTITURE. KARAS SAYS CZECHS PREVAILED UPON TOMASEK TO PUT DR. JACHYM OFF UNTIL MAY, WHICH HE DID IN A CALL TO ARCHBISHOP KOENIG OF VIENNA. KARAS, ACCORDING TO HIS OWN ACCOUNT, DEMANDED OF DEPFONMIN JABLONSKY TO KNOW WHY BISHOP JACHYM WAS BEING PREVENTED FROM COMING TO PRAGUE; RECEIVING NO GOOD ANSWER, HE ASKED JABLONSKY IF HE HAD EVER READ THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT, PARTICULARLY THE PORTIONS ON FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND PERSONAL CONTACTS. AN ARGUMENT ENSUED, LEAVING PERSONAL RELATIONS SOMEWHAT STRAINED. RUDE PRAVO 29 MARCH CONFIRMS THAT THERE WERE DIFFICULTIES OVER BISHOP JACHYM'S TRAVEL. IN EDITORIAL DENYING THAT THE AUSTRIAN CHURCHMAN HAD BEEN PREVENTED FROM ATTENDING, UNSPECIFIED VIENNESE PAPERS AND AUSTRIAN M.P. ALOIS HOCK ARE UPBRAIDED FOR

CONTRIBUTING TO AN "ANTI-CZECHOSLOVAK CAMPAIGN." KARAS SEEMED TO THINK CZECHOSLOVAK-AUSTRIAN RELATIONS MIGHT HAVE BEEN DEALT A SERIOUS BLOW, PARTICULARLY AS THE INCIDENT TOOK PLACE WHILE THE AUSTRIAN REPRESENTATIVE TO THE CZECHOSLOVAK-AUSTRIAN MIXED COMMISSION (AMB. STEIN) WAS IN PRAGUE. ACCORDING TO KARAS, THE AUSTRIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS "EXTREMELY ANGRY" ON GOOD FRIDAY.

6. THAT THE CZECHOSLOVAK AUTHORITIES APPARENTLY EXERCISED SOME PRESSURE ON TOMASEK IN SHAPING THE INVESTITURE AND ACCOMPANYING FESTIVITIES IS FURTHER REFLECTED IN FACT THAT WEST GERMAN TELEVISION, WHICH HAD ASKED TO INTERVIEW THE CARDINAL, GOT A CALL FROM HIM ON EASTER EVE SAYING HE COULD NOT COMPLY WITH THEIR REQUEST. NOTE: WE ARE TOLD THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FILMED PERSONS ENTERING AND LEAVING ST. VITUS'S THROUGH ONE SMALL DOOR THAT WAS OPEN. WHILE WE OBSERVED THE CAMERAS, WE COULD NOT IDENTIFY THEM POSITIVELY AS MININT EQUIPMENT.

7. COMMENT: THE REGIME CLEARLY VIEWED TOMASEK'S INVESTITURE AS A SENSITIVE EVENT WHICH REQUIRED CLOSE MONITORING SO AS NOT TO GET OUT OF HAND. THAT THIS IS SO IS IN ITSELF A SIGN OF THE REGIME'S INSECURITY. AT THE VERY LEAST, THE HEAVY-HANDED TREATMENT OF BISHOP COADJUTOR OF VIENNA'S "NON-VISIT" DETRACTED FROM THE PROCEEDINGS, POSSIBLY DAMAGING THE IMPROVED RELATIONS PRAGUE HAS BEEN ASSIDUOUSLY CULTIVATING WITH VIENNA. IN ADDITIONS, THE ON-GOING CZECHOSLOVAK-VATICAN NEGOTIATIONS, WITH A VATICAN DELEGATION DUE TO VISIT IN APRIL, MAY HAVE BEEN SET BACK. END COMMENT.
"DECONTROLLED AFTER FOUR YEARS FROM ORIGINATING DATE."
BYRNE

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